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8/2, 1984
etc. **Blaubart**
(Bluebeard)
(W. GERMAN/SWISS-
COLOR-16m)

Venice, Aug. 31.

A Wesdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR) Cologne, and DRS, Zurich, coproduction. TV producers, Hartwig Schmidt, Martin Schassmann. Features entire cast. Written and directed by Krzysztof Zanussi, based on Max Frisch's story with the same title. Camera (color), Slawomir Idziak; sets, Hans Eichin, Lothar Kirchem; costumes, Detlef Papendorf; editing, Liesgret Schmitt-Klink; music, Wojciech Kilar; sound, Gerhard Trampert. Reviewed at Venice Film Fest (Venice Tv), Aug. 30, 1984. Running time: 100 MINS.

Cast: Vadim Glowna (Doktor Felix Schaad), Karen Baal (Lilian), Vera Tschechowa (Gisela), Ingrid Resch (Corinne), Elisabeth Trissenaar (Andrea), Maja Komorowska (Katharina), Margarethe von Trotta (Jutta), Barbara Lass (Rosalinde), Eberhard Feik (Public Prosecutor), Hans Paetsch (Judge), Guido Baumann (Defense Attorney), Leslie Malton (Maid).

There's not much cinematic to recommend in Krzysztof Zanussi's tv production, unspooled in the new "Venezia Tv" section. Instead of reaching a probably acceptable audience before a tube, accustomed to talking heads in a courtroom caper (reminiscent in this case of the heyday of Perry Mason on Stateside television), the 16m print shown in Venice left fest critics rather high-and-dry with mixed emotions as to just what to do with it (the same was true of other tv entries at fest).

Here we have a recent published story by Swiss writer Max Frisch, who has written a quite intellectually satisfying variation on the Bluebeard theme of a man with eight wives on his conscience. The twists in the story are the death of a call girl with the chief suspect being our "bluebeard," Felix Schaad of Zurich. Schaad pleads his innocence, and the women in his life are trotted into the courtroom before

the camera to tell different parts of the story.

All well and good, but it makes for heavy concentration to follow the motifs as explicated: it seems Bluebeard Schaad is guilty after all via his own interior monolog, but by that time the audience has given up on the courtroom caper altogether. So — read the book.

Tv pic was lensed in 16m in both German and English versions, the latter shown here. —Holl.